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Tintagel



WALTER S. HINCHMAN



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Tintagel

AND

Other Verses

BY

Walter S. Hinchman



GROTON

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1910

To R.B.O.

*There's one fellow that I wot of,
Who in full career of life
Still can dream of daring princes,
Still can bare his hunting-knife
When amid the purple forests
He beholds the lion ramp,
Or above the after-hatches
Hears the pirate-chieftain tramp.
He has won the golden apples,
He has climbed the outer cliff,
And beheld the Indian stalking
The ferocious hippogriff.*

.

*O my brothers, if you only
Were with faith of children blest,
You would know the sun arisen
Is still rising farther west;
And between the morn and evening,
In the grayness of the day,
You would see the splendid colours
And the magic of your way!*

Of the verses in this book "The Winter Warriors" has appeared in "The Atlantic Monthly", "Flammantia Moenia Mundi" in "Poet Lore", and "Marlowe" in "The New York Times Saturday Review". They are now reprinted with permission.

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TINTAGEL

TINTAGEL.

I.

BELOW, the unseen, swinging, Cornish sea
Sounded afar, as when its distant murmur
Lives faintly in a shell. From out the fog
That wreathed fantastically about the rocks
And stretched white fingers in among the clefts
A single gull screamed once — a single break.
Above the eastern moors the waning moon
Cast her cold gleam ; caught in the spectral light,
Strange figures of the fog rose on the cliffs
And passed to nothingness, where vaguely huge,
Like some tall galleon lifting on the swell,
Tintagel peered gray through the drifting mist.

Long since, up there above the wind-vexed
seas,
Full in the splendour of a summer sun,
Flashing the jewelled magic of her dress,

Sate Iseult, the imperious Cornish queen ;
And there below, where the full flood invades
The cave that of Tintagel forms an isle,
Her bark first grated on the Cornish strand,—
In those old times of dazed imaginings,
When all the sea-foam fashioned faery-flowers,
When she had not yet weened the sad result
Of those bright hours with Tristram in the bark,
When, a proud Irish princess, cheerily
She challenged Mark to meet her at the marge.

Unhappy queen ! Long years had gone when
came

Tristram, that ill-starred knight of Lyonesse,
Tristram, than never fairer harped and sang,
Nor never sadder loved so hopelessly.
For hark ! those hurried steps upon the stair,
Clanking their message of a fierce delight,
Requite of ten years' unrewarded passion ;
See, see that last embrace, those fair white arms,
Those eager fingers, and that furious kiss !
And see, behind, the coward Mark ! -- and hear
That one wild scream when Tristram's spirit parts !

II

Once yet again they rose, like ghosts of knights,
Those strange white figures of the fog that passed
To nothingness on horses made of mist.

Arthur was there in his majestic age,
As he went forth to battle in the West ;
And after him rode armed the fairest flower
Of noble knights that e'er have splintered spears
Charging the ringing lists of Camelot.
So passed they on—Sir Gawaine and Beaumains ;
The Red Lawns Knight ; and Mordred, foul with
crime ;

Sir Kay, the seneschal ; Leodegrance ;
And his fair daughter, Guinevere the queen,
Casting a flower to list-scarred Launcelot ;
And, last of all, a triumph in his eyes,
Peerless and pure, Sir Galahad alone.

III.

Below, the unseen, swinging Cornish sea . . .
Softly a breeze blew from the western main,
And the fog vanished 'neath the rising moon.

The billows, heaving to the westering wind,
Plashed louder on the pebbles, and the gulls,
A thousand startled simultaneously,
Screamed wildly from the cliffs. High, bare, and
black,

Out of the moonlit sea Tintagel stood,
Substantial, real — the work of Him who made
The void and from the void this earth and sea,
And fixed the firmament and fired the sun.
Or ever Arthur came these rocks upreared
Their battlements against this Cornish sea ;
Each year twelve moons shine on these desolate
moors ;

And gulls have ever wheeled about these cliffs.
Into this desolation came a race
And raised a kingdom proud, and passed — and
now

The same old God-built desolation reigns.
To-morrow's sun on high Tintagel's towers
Will show the ancient ruins—nothing more ;
And they in time will join the pageant pale
Of figures that fare ghostly through the fog.

THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA.

“Die unbegreiflich hohen Werke
Sind herrlich, wie am ersten Tag!”

Goethe: Faust.

I

FOUR youths, accoutred all for going forth,
Stood at a gateway labelled “Life.” One leaned
In bright apparel by the wall and looked
Far out, as if he caught faint whisperings
And saw bright pastures in a distant land.
The next stood restless as a battle-horse
That hears the deep reverberance of war.
A third strode up and down, to go unready,
Yet lingering impatiently. The fourth,
Unheedful of the others, watched a bird
That soaring carolled at the sun. Anon
He whistled softly to himself, but ever
He followed fixedly the small bird’s flight,

6 THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA

“Come !” cried the warrior, eager to set out.
“Hold !” said the first. “What do you hope to see?
On what fair world rush you impetuous
With martial clangour? For I see beyond
Not war, but meadows fresh, and down long val-
leys

The shepherds sitting in the beechen shade,
And meditating on their oaten reeds.
Dreamer, you cry. Alas ! Who turmoil seeks
Deeply shall drink thereof. Things hideous
I may meet, but I'll not embrace the fiend !
And hoping thus (for it may be the fiend
Is shape but of our own substantial sin),
I may chance but on pleasant ways and pass
To meads a-flower in sunshine without end.”

“That were existence !” came reply : “to watch
In idle indolence the stream slip on,
To chant a silly ditty and forsooth
So sink into oblivion ! The world's
Great struggles summon. Let us fare and fight
Gloriously as the knights of olden days,
For honour, truth, and courtesy,— for love,

THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA 7

For all that ever fairly drew bright swords ;
— Fight, suffer, struggle ! Then we shall come
through.”

“A pest upon your visions !” quoth the third ;
“So featly fashioned and so simply free
From the great breaking burdens of the world —
The sin, the sorrow, and the suffering
Which none may pass through and remain quite
whole.

What shall be said for children fatherless ?
What done for women lost in crime ? What thought
Of all the bigotry and lies — not lies
Born of light words, but lies of lives — the mad
And monstrous offspring of a cancerous mind ?
At these we'll blithely snap our fingers — yes !
And sit with shepherds idly squeaking pipes,
Or tilt against the phantoms of our brain.
Go forth, my friend, and make your silly songs,
And, you, slay dragons by the forest-full.
At last there is but misery and death —
A struggle of despair, not victory.
Ahead I see only incompetence,

8 THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA

Ceaseless confusion without any plan.

And I shall fail, I know, — and so shall you.”

Then, after a brief pause, he turned him round
And thus addressed the watcher of the skies :

“You, too, perhaps have some fair, easy scheme ;
Come, tell the story that you see in stars.”

“You much mistake,” quoth that one ; “why
should I,
Or why should you have visions, if they be
But fabrics of our fancy ? Do you see
That bird ? He merely soars and sings. Yet well
I know that God hath called us forth ; being men
We have the high chance of a life beyond :
Perhaps we shall meet sorrow and despair ;
Perhaps fight tournaments with ancient kings ;
Perhaps join shepherds sitting in the shade :
Before us something beckons — but one great
Perhaps cheers all : we too may soar and sing.”

II.

THREE men, at sundown, in a cottage sat.
One, lingering near the threshold, on his white,
Long locks a flowery garland wore ; across

His shoulders broad was flung a goat-skin ; in
His hand a shepherd's crook. His old eyes gleamed
And silly laughter played about his mouth,
As in thin voice he piped this madrigal :

Come, clasp hands, and beat a measure ;
All your pastoral trophies bring ;
Decked with field and woodland treasure,
Hail great Pan, the shepherd's king !

See the ancient race immortal
Down the deep Sicilian dell ;
Arethusa at the portal,
Garlanded with asphodel.

Hours again with Amaryllis,
And brave songs with Corydon,
Piping day-long love of Phyllis,
In the olive-shaded sun.

Then, when Hesperus is gliding
Down the soft Sicilian sky,
And Diana's hunt is riding
Over Ætna white and high

10 THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA

Shepherds by the water sitting,
Flocks all huddled in the dales,
Make we madrigals befitting
Melibœus' sweetest tales.

Come, clasp hands, and beat a measure ;
All your pastoral trophies bring ;
Decked with field and woodland treasure,
Hail great Pan, the shepherd's king !

Another sat before a dying fire,
A warrior doubled with his weight of years.
Scarred was his face, seamed with the suns and
swords

Of battle on the open plain ; and yet,
For all his feebleness, his manner bore
The tokens of tried valour, and his eye,
Dimmed with long service under scorching skies,
Still flashed forth spirit unsubdued ; and when
At times he spoke, in his deep voice there rang
The tone of one had stormed a breach and won ;
And as he sang, his notes swelled lustily :

THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA 11

Oh, a song at night by the camp-fire light,
And the thunderous guns at dawn !
Then the labor of men in a close-gripped fight,
And the oaths and prayers of zeal and fright,
Charge, charge ! and the victory won !
Charge home ! and the victory won !

Then our flag set high in the breeze to fly,
While the chosen spirit slips
From the tortured body of him that is slain ;—
And I take horse through the night again, —
Heigh-ho ! and my lady's lips !
A kiss of my lady's lips !

Beside him, only nearer to the fire,
There crouched a shivering, eyeless, bald old man,
Toothless and speechless, racked with long disease,
A pestilent presence, cursed by life and death ; --
No song nor even any whine had he.

At last there came a stranger unto them
And told them of that other wayfarer,
Their comrade setting forth in untried youth.
“He spoke,” the stranger said, “of your young talk,

12 THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA

Your concrete visions of this earthly life.

‘And they shall find them,’ was his word ; ‘thrice
bitter

The lot of him who rears in fantasy

A splendid palace for his own reward ;

Or him who counts the spoils of victory

And like a swimmer spent inglorious dies ;

And bitter alike the lot of him who builds

A hovel for his fancied misery.’

“And now I see that he has spoken truth.

Here is one sings and passes to his grave ;

And here one worn with fruitless errantry ;

And here one sick with his own misery.

And what else have ye ? Ye have sought and found

But that brave traveller who has not returned,—

He too lived blithely with the swains and sang,

He too fought tournaments with ancient kings,

And day-long battles on the plains of war ;

Honour and fame and love were given him ;

And, he, too, met with sorrow ; ay, he fell —

And was an outcast from his fellow-men.

But ever listening to his hymning heart,

And of a purpose infinite and strong,
Like a great river that must meet the sea,
He passed the harbor mouth and joined the flood.

“For once I stood upon the shore and heard
The deep-sea song he sings with others there,—
No mountain brook-song of his dawning days,
Nor yet the murmuring of the summer noon
Soft from the river flooding the lush reeds,
But something final, melodies as strong
As the Homeric breakers on the beach.
And when I heard that music, swift and slow,
Speaking of sorrow infinite, and joy,
Calm and confusion, failure and success,
And life that shall endure — oh, then I knew
That noble souls triumphantly arrive.

“While I thus stood, the sun broke from the
sea,
Trailing with fire his glistening chariot-wheels,
And in his thunder-march took up the song —
Sea, sky, and wind in one full harmony!
From that great, multitudinous chant there clings
One little measure in my memory,

14 THEY THAT GO DOWN TO THE SEA

Which cheers my steps and feeds the sacred fire
Which keeps the immortal temple bright within :

‘Whatever the pine-tree shall whisper,

Or the cloud-rack tell of the sky,

Whatever the surges shall thunder,

Or the white-winged sea-gulls cry,

Whatever the river shall murmur

From under its golden bars,

And the laughter light of the sunshine,

And the silent song of the stars,—

Therein is the melody matchless

That thrills in the spirit of man,

Therein is the harmony faultless

Of the Maker’s infinite plan.’ ”

FLAMMANTIA MOENIA MUNDI.

You may remember how we stood alone,
And silent watched from a high eastern hill
The autumn setting sun, bright as the fires
That burn along the elm-arched ways of fall.
In front stood one small isle of dark green pines,
Down by the river smoked an evening fire,
And on the hill beyond a cottage perched
And jutted dark against the western light.
Far, far beyond, in blue that seemed to fade,
Yet ever changed to gold or ere it died,
The mountains silent stood against the deep,
Ranging eternal toward an endless west.

We speechless stood — forever thus to gaze;
One common thought was ours, one keen desire
To sing, like angels in their melody,
Those mountain peaks against that glowing sky;
A single word for that ethereal blue!

Nay, a mere whispered thought — a look — a gesture—

Immortal aspiration to express
That master workman at his final task.
We thought perchance of young Orestes then,
How he and Pylades stood on the shore,
And gazing at the open, beating sea,
How one oft swung his spangle-hilted sword
Till future deeds took shape and clustered round
 them,

As star on star springs countless from the night.
And then perhaps a hint of all the pain,
Inexorable fate, impersonal,
Of those snake-locks and of that hideous laughter,
The graceless sisters heralding a Hell.
And all our aspiration infinite
Shrank as the dark drew on. With deeds unwrought,
With all that fair faith run to lees, we left.

Another time together stood we two
Upon the chapel's skyward-pointing tower
Under a winter's moon. The night was cold
And clear ; across the glistening snow the hills

Rose white and far, beyond the shadow-land,
Like ghosts against the night. Perhaps we had
Again brave thoughts, perhaps we dreamed once
more,

Under that moon-cold sky, of things too far
To fashion, and we prayed, in that pure air,
Faintly to shadow forth the deathless soul
Which nature showed us two at that midnight ;
As who should say, 'Come then, 'tis fashioned thus ;
Behold you but this single masterpiece.
What ! would your aspiration breathe and be,
And then brook bonds of earthly fearfulness ;
Wish bravely and then meet defeat, and thus,
Failing at every new desire, so end,—
Complacent in eternal apathy ?'

The thought of that lost sunset, of that night
When, heart and head, we drank eternity,
Brings Marlowe's 'broken branch' to memory :
How, being human, we must e'er aspire ;
How, being human, we can ne'er attain.
One craftily contrives his handiwork ;
Another plies with fingers marvelous :

A silver strand, a bit of beaten brass,
A golden goblet brimmed with burning wine,
A song sung softly on a summer's eve—
The shadow of a glory just to be—
But none hath builded final, quite complete,
Nor can build, nature's deathless masterpiece.

And yet — that sunset and that moonlight
pure,

The inspiration and the dream, the trace
That in our memories survives, were more
Than fond bright baubles for a child's caprice.
Perchance the thought, the mere wish to express,
Is art in kind as much as finished form;
The shadow strikes, and be it ne'er so faintly —
If only in a flickering glimpse of sun—
In shape and manner its original.
They say, 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came';
Well, then, put slug-horn to your lips and blow!
Not feebly, courting limitations passed,
But blow a brave blast, as you would come through!
For in that shadow's shadow, in that touch
Which tentative shapes all we seek to know,

There lurks a breath of something infinite,
A faint first flash of immortality,
Prophetic of divinity to be.

THE PALACES.

ANACON, the shepherd youth,
 Dreamed upon the hill ;
Idle, for he had no sheep ;
 Idle — had no will ;
Saw the purple headlands rise,
 Palaces untold,
And a fleet of purple sails
 On a sea of gold.
Milo, freedman of the town,
 Trafficker in wares
Bought from Persian princesses,
 Man of great affairs,
Milo found the shepherd youth
 Idle 'neath a tree,
Mocked him for his idleness,
 Mocked his reverie,

Pointed to the busy town,
Loud with human life,
Urged him leave his fruitless dreams,
Join in manly strife.

Anacon, the shepherd youth,
Only closed his eyes,
Murmured that the town would die
As a tempest dies,

Leave behind a straggling rack,
Then a silent space,
While through ages stars and moon
Desolation trace.

“But my palaces will live ;
They are ever fair !”—
Answered Milo : “Like yon cloud
Will your palace flare,

“Turn and twist and tumble down,
Cool to sombre gray :
Insubstantial as a dream,
Phantom of a day.”

THE PALACES

Anacon, the shepherd youth,
Only closed his eyes ;
Said : "A peacock's painted plumes
Are my homilies."

.

With the night there broke the storm
On the little town ;
And the levin-lighted fires
Ravaged up and down,

Raged the flaming streets along,
Scorched the sea-washed shores,
Wrecked for Milo all his pride,
Burned him ships and stores.

And when later on the hill
Men and women stood,
Wailing for their treasures lost,
Life and livelihood,

Anacon beheld a cloud
Purple on the dawn ;
Smiling mused the shepherd lad :
"Villages are gone ;

But my palaces, that pass,
 Phoenix-fashion rise,
And each morn and evening here,
At whatever time of year,
Princesses forever young
Walk the golden glades among
 Of my paradise."

Milo saw the shepherd lad
 Happy 'midst the grief;
Struck him dying to the earth,
 Found a dear relief.

.

Thus the village flaring died,
 Thus too Anacon;
Milo, trafficker in wares,
 Now is also gone.

But each morn and evening there
(Now unseen, but not less fair)
Where the palaces of dream
 Phoenix-fashion rise,
Princesses forever young
Walk the golden glades among
 Of a sunlit paradise.

THE LEGEND OF ULLSWATER.

I

“Oh, whither away, Sir Eglamore,
In the gleam of the winter moon?”
“To Our Lady’s chapel by Ullswater,
That I may pray one boon.”

He has kissed fair Emma and ridden forth
By Lyulph’s Tower old,
Through Gowbarrow Park, where Aira Force
Comes down through caverns cold.

Loud, loud laughs then Sir Eglamore;
“To Our Lady i’ sooth!” cries he.
Loud curses then Sir Eglamore;
“By the Holy Rood!” swears he,

“Ask heaven’s grace of the devil’s face !

’Twere a merry jest, my faith !

An I make not children fatherless,

May I come home a wraith !

“Ha ha !” laughs the Knight with hand on hilt,

As he rides the chapel by ;

“My good right arm is strength enow ;

—Yon door is for them that die.”

II

In Gowbarrow Hall fair Emma sits

And she waiteth patiently,

But her needle-work has slipped her hand—

“Alack for my love !” says she.

One night in the winter cold there comes

A rider through the park ;

Fair Emma has run to the window wide

(Oh, her heart is hot in her panting side !)

And has strained into the dark.

“Sir Eglamore at last ! ” cries she,

“With his honour fairly won—”

Alas ! ’tis only a messenger,

And his message briefly done.

He has galloped away in the frozen dark,

But ever Emma hears

The beat of galloping hoofs that come,

Comegalloping through the years.

III

Afar in the Scottish borderland

Arises Sir Eglamore.

“Enough of slaughter and sin,” thinks he ;

“I’ve a love at home in my Lake Countree ;

I’ll back to Lyulph’s shore.”

He has ridden from Carlisle city forth,

By Hesketh Heath he has gone,

And ever he muses as on he rides

Of the evil he has done.

“And oh, if fair Emma another lord
Has ta'en in place of me!
Woe worth the knock at Gowbarrow door
When I hear his minstrelsy!”
He has come to roaring Aira Force
And paused there for drink;—
Alas! what sees he in the dark?
A fair maid's body white and stark,
Awash below the brink.
He has caught fair Emma into his arms,
He has kissed her cheek and chin,
He has looked upon her wide, blue eyes,
He has cried her name to the naked skies,
— But her voice he may not win.

IV

Slow walks to the chapel by the lake
In hermit's hood and shoon
Sir Eglamore — of Our Lady's grace
To pray at last one boon.

THE CUCKOO OF BORROWDALE.

THEY tell a strange story in old Borrowdale
That you may believe or not as you choose,—
Such a fanciful, odd, impossible tale
That I, even credulous I, refuse
To believe it. But then, whatever you think,
They aver that the story they tell is true ;
And, what is still more, by the river's brink
There's a proof — an old wall — that they show to
you.

One Spring — it was marvelous fair that day,
For the snow-drop was springing and robin was sing-
ing,
But loudest of all from twig and spray
Was the double note of the cuckoo ringing—
One Spring at the doors when their work was done
The farmer-folk sat in the first warm sun.
And old Michael said, as he sipped his tea,

“Eh, John, it’s brave here under the sky
To be sitting thus? It’s great pity that we
Can’t always do so.” And John, he said, “Ay.”
And the goodwife she turned from her spinning-
wheel;

“There’s something,” she said, “in the air I feel
Makes it better to live when the sun is bright
And the snows are melting on Scawfell height.”
And so they gathered and talked it o’er :
One said that his crops were better for Spring,
Another complained of his minished store,—
And, brief, they agreed in this one thing,—
That they wanted nothing but endless Spring.
“For the winter’s so cold !” croaked one old crone ;
“And so long !” croaked the next ; and “Ou, ay,”
said John.

Thus it came that the good folk decided they’d try
To change the seasons — and you or I,
If we’d lived through a Borrowdale winter cold
And seen the poor sheep in the snow-bound fold
And the folk half starved — we’d understand *why*.
Yet it wasn’t the *why* but the *how* that they

Racked their poor brains to discover when
They gathered upon that springtime day
At the cottage door of the farmer. Then,
All of a sudden, a strange form rose
As a pike peering over a hillside shows
When you climb to the pass. "It's easy enough!"
Said the stranger in voice and in garments rough.
"Don't you hear the cuckoo blithely sing
When the first green buds burst in the vale?
Don't you know that he always comes with Spring
Down here by the beck in Borrowdale?
To-day when I came over Styhead Pass,
As I waved good-bye to my little lass,
By wild Wastwater I heard them sing —
Lassie and cuckoo — and *that* was Spring!
But up on the pass there was ice and snow,
And the tarn was frozen, and no song stirred
The treeless mountains; — and so I know
That the Spring you have when you have the bird.
Shut your valley tight, build a wall across
Where the beck flows out through the Borrowdale
Jaws;

Keep the bird in the valley, and ever you
 Shall have Spring and the song of the blithe
 cuckoo."

The stranger was done. "To be sure!" cried they,
 "'Tis the cuckoo that brings and guards the Spring!
 When he's gone the Summer flies fast away,
 And Autumn flies too, and Winter is king.
 We'll build us a wall at the Borrowdale Jaws,
 For to South and to East and the West across
 Are mountains that make us a rampart high.
 We'll build us a wall!" And John said, "Ou, ay."

Now whether the farmer folk had Spring
 Through the whole twelve months I cannot say;
 But to prove that they builded the wall they bring
 To your notice a fragment grim and grey
 That stands where the beck flows out of the vale
 And becomes a river in Derwent-dale.
 In the teeth of the Borrowdale Jaws it stands,
 And they *say* it was builded by human hands.

But whatever became of the rest of the wall
 Is as hard to catch as a waterfall.
 One says that the valley was flooded with water

TILBERTHWAITE FELL.

THE moon is down, the stars shine clear,

The valley sleepeth still ;

The trumpets of the night sound here,

High on the windy hill.

The dalesmen in the hamlet know

God's silence and His care ;

But of His mighty music . . . oh !

Forever unaware !

THE DUNES.

THESE are the shores and these the wind-scarred
dunes

Of that far western land of magic promise
Which lured the sturdy sailors of the East
To peril their frail pinnaces in hope
Of "more beyond", trusting in God, and fain
To win great honour for their Virgin Queen.
But here they touched not; warned by the long line
Of gleaming breakers, veered they north or south,
Found harbours, settled, reared a mighty folk;
And that same people, spreading through the years,
First built great cities—markets of the world;
Then, hating the vast fabric of their hands,
They fled along the coasts to cool their hearts,
Grown feverish with the panic of their toil;
But centuries of ingrained lust for show,
Sordid desire of magnificence,

Attended, turned their hands again to work,
Sat by their ears and whispered as they slept, —
In short, they builded only as they knew.

Thus, stranger, wondering at our peopled shores,
More desolate than when the sea and sand
And dunes in ancient desolation stretched,
Thus are our hands of thistles full and thorns.
Yet still untouched, still magic as of yore,
When Hudson coasted northward or when Drake
Looked landward from the tossing Pelican,
One little space remains. The train-spced world
Counts Sea Girt but a line of tents and trees ;
Yet there be those who know and love the dunes,
The routed cedars and the embattled pines,
The long brown beaches and the unspoiled sea ;
For here they know that Nature, still unchecked,
Hath wrought through ages wondrously, hath blest
With calm this Paradise ; that here the sea,
The same sea sailed by Drake and Frobisher,
Still carries in its bosom ample cheer
For those who cheer will have, and for the sad
Such presage of an elemental power
That grief grows temporal and forgets itself.

SEA GIRT.

LIE long among the sand-dunes,
On waves of grasses tossed,
And coast by cedar islands,
In bay-bush fragrance lost ;
Lie long and hearken truly,
That through the changing year
The song of summer surges
May waken in your ear ;
That afternoons of August,
The blue of sea and sky,
And white of bar-spent combers
May slumber in your eye.

THE SONG OF THE VIKING WIND.

HERE where the foam on my breath is blown,
Here where the spindrift stings,
Where my song is a pledge of the blasted hedge,
Where only the beach grass clings,
Here is my right that I guard with might,
The fief that is mine to hold,
The fretted sand with the seal of my hand,
The fief that was mine of old.

Afar in the mid-sea meadows I rise,
Men call me the Viking wind,
And I race with a cloud to serve as shroud
Of my heathen host behind.

All things that come from an inland home,
The oak and the stricken pine,
The cedar and bay and the holly gay,
Turn tail and crouch like kine,

And to gardens fair that man rears with care
On my marches of the mist,
In one black night I bring my blight,
My scourge that none resist.
Only the flowers of my ocean bowers
I grant the grace to grow,—
From every mound of my furrowed ground
My spume-white blossoms blow.

The seed is sown and the flowers are blown
With the same stroke of my hand;—
Oh, gay bedight in garlands white
I ride into my land!
All up and down from town to town
I ride the beaches bare,
And carve my runes on the desert dunes,
To mark my proper share.

He who would dwell among my hosts
Must know no roof but cloud;
He who would dare with me to fare
Must ride my coursers proud;

Must ride them right through the winter night

Across the untracked seas ;

Must with them ride the beaches wide

When spray-drenched forelocks freeze.

And when the summer wind blows soft

From cedar and from pine,

And lazy combers gleam at night

In one long liquid line,

A jealous eye is watching nigh

To guard my desert dunes,

And a northeast hand shall come to land

To carve my Viking runes.

THE WINTER WARRIORS.

THIS road we ride forever,
The winds are up to-night,
The clouds are black and scattered,
The moon is keen and white.

Come, winds of winter, striding
Adown the mountain side,
In frozen, clanging armour
Your sworded warriors ride.

Come, heralding your storm-king,
In raiment spangled, white,
Who tries our hearts and sinews,
Who calls us forth to fight.

Come, bring the five-month winter,
Of boisterous days and snow,
Of silent, trackless forests,
And fir-trees bended low ;

Of nights when all the heavens
Are dashed with splendid stars,
When Northern Lights in ancient fights
Clash flaming on the scaurs.

See, see the winter warriors,
That spur in squalls of white,
With lance in rest and plume on crest,
All charging through the night!

The stars are in my pulses,
And white the wind-swept snow!
Strike spur and slacken bridle—
We'll ride forever so!

VICTORY.

RIDING, riding endlessly,
Through the eastern sky,
Clouds that, routed by the wind,
Flags forsake and fly !
Hosts along the eastern hills
In disorder throng ;
See the fires of victory !
Hear the triumph song !
Mountains purple, as the sun
Sinks behind their height, —
Silently the stars prick out
In the windy night.

NORTHERN LIGHTS.

So you wonder, my child, what those fires may
mean?

What those faint and trembling fingers are?
In what dim land hangs that curtain green,
With its fringes and tassels and ghostly sheen?
And why does it always look so far?

Time was when those lights burned a brighter red,
And loud was the shock of ax and spear,
When the hills were strown with heroes dead,
And Valkyries swooped as the battle bled,
And Valhalla's doors swung wide and clear.

Now faint are the fires and old our eyes,
And we hear no sound of the ringing blow;
And only the ghosts of the Gods arise
And fight by night in the northern skies,
—For Ragnarök was years ago.

You smile, my child, as you would say,
 “Will they fight no more, those heroes slain?
Will those fires not brighter burn by day,
When Odin gathers his host for fray,—
 Comes never a Ragnarök again?”

* * * * *

For each his fight and for each his fall;
 For each his struggle with staves and rods;
And for each the clear Valkyrie call,
And the flash of Valhalla's high-roofed hall
 —For each his Twilight of the Gods!

THE FEET UPON THE MOUNTAINS.

O WILD north wind, will you never have rest,
That buds may blossom and grass grow green?
Will your ice-mailed ranks never cease their quest,
Never sheathe their blade with its edge so keen?

Must we struggle ever and never attain,
Meet ever a foe and never a friend?
Shall we strive for a final rest in vain,
Never stop to sing at the very end?

Look well, old foe, to your armour now,
For there comes a friend with the splendid dawn ;
He bears no lance but the light on his brow,
And his manner is mild as the light-foot fawn.

Look well, old foe, for you dare not stand
'Gainst him and his joyous company ;
Your shafts are shattered and sunk your hand,
Your banners are struck and your armies flee.

46 THE FEET UPON THE MOUNTAINS

To-morrow or ever the sun be set
We shall gather our spoils and bless our friend;
Take heart and stand to the struggle yet, —
We shall stop to sing at the very end.

TO A MEADOWLARK

Across the brown fields chilled with winds of March
Thy song thrills clear — clear joy that swells to
pain.

Song-sparrows herald day from elm and larch,
And robins chatter punctually again ;
But thou, unseen, the colour of the ground,
Unmarked by loungers of the garden lawn,
Still singest matins for my pleasure — hark !
Was e'er joy so profound?

Can it swell so to sadness? Bringeth dawn
A memory of some sorrow to the lark?

Long time have old bards sung the wild sea-gull,
Crying and flying by the scourging sea,
But such a changeless wail must grief annul ;
For unmixed grief a kind of joy can be.

Nay, rather is there passion in the swan,
 Regretful of a graceful life so soon
 To ebb ; yet even he may dream a part
As graceful as that gone ;—
 From woe to woe in melody to swoon
 Were not a misery to an aching heart.

But thou, sweet lark, hast no monotony,
 No single note as harsh as grinding seas ;
Nor, like the dying swan, a melody
 To send to present pain a swift surcease.
Nor art thou, like the tawny nightingale,
 Or like her swallow-sister, cruelly wed,
 Or like the Halycon on the hushèd main,
Immortal in a tale ;
 In rime is Philomel transfigurèd,
 And swallow-sister Procne lives again.

Oh, tell us, meadowlark, if tale there be,
 What joy thou knewest and what wrong was
 done,
That thus with human wail thy melody
 Should swell against so warm, so glad a sun !

Algonquin, Huron, Iroquois, or Sioux,

What part was thine, what passion, what fate
drear?

Did young braves steal through forests dark
for thee?

Or dost thou thus renew

Thy song to indicate the changing year?

Wert thou some Indian Queen—or art thou here

But to recall the day's uncertainty?

IF ROSES HAD NOT FADED.

IF roses had not faded,
And frosts had never come,
We had been gay together,
Like bees in August heather, —
One had not now been dumb.
Not yet we miss our play-mate ;
But when the May is come,
And lads are gay together
In blithest blossom-weather, —
Oh, then shall we be dumb !
And birds that silent sorrow,
And bees that never hum,
Had always gay paraded,—
If roses had not faded,
And frosts had never come.

CINCINNATUS.

HE stands there in the furrow,
That ancient Roman lord —
When lo ! His cloak is purple,
And in his hand a sword.

He triumphs in his purple ;
The world is his for *play*—
“I choose my farm and furrow ;
My *work* is done to-day.”

MILTON IN OLD AGE.

YET lived he like a prophet whom no blow
Of adverse fate nor ruin of the right
Could force his star-sent service to forego:
Though lost his cause, though sealed his mortal sight,
Though that fair temple which he strove to raise,
Temple of Truth and Liberty and Song,
Scattered in ruins lay, and toilsome days
Died unremembered by the heedless throng,
The fickle and the insolent and bold,
The revellers who called a puppet king
And in the streets broached butts of vintage old
And rang the bells and cheered the crownèd
Thing.

Yet at his door he sate, defeated, blind,
And saw Satanic Pandemonium rise,
And read the fatal error of mankind,
Shut out by flaming sword from Paradise.
Thus sate he, grim recorder of man's sin,
Black-suited prophet in his poverty,
Oh, careless London ! Flagrant with the din
Of riot and light-hearted blasphemy !

MARLOWE

THOU didst behold the master-builder sun
Fashion cloud-palaces in faery-lands ;
And thou didst hear the flood-tide breakers run,
Crashing their choruses on glittering sands.
Thy voice, Kit Marlowe, had their majesty,
Their splendour, and their thunder, and their
charge ;
And songs of stars and sunrise were in thee,
Thy thoughts were mighty and thy accents large.
For through thee have we marched with Tambur-
laine,
Shouting subjection to proud Indian kings ;
And, spite of all thy failure to attain
Thy far-seen goal, thou send'st us word of things
Victorious, priceless, were it only this :
"To ride in triumph through Persepolis !"

ON VISITING GOLDSMITH'S GRAVE.

(TEMPLE COURT, LONDON)

NOR flaunted by a tribute verse, nor yet
Trumpeted by an abbey's towers tall,
Ungloried by a solemn festival,
"Poor Poll," thou liest here, thy grave unwet
By tears of hast'ning passers, who forget
Thy wit and gentleness. On whom shall fall
Thy garments gay? What notice shall recall
To thee our love, to thee our endless debt?
Yet thou hast cause for solace in thy sleep;
In yonder Abbey, sepulchred in state,
Where hordes of vandals visitation keep,
Johnson and Garrick side by side do lie.
Thy requiem is played at heaven's gate;
Thy vault is, day and night, the open sky.

COR CORDIUM.

SHELLEY, thy cry eternal speaks to those
Who know thy beacon, shining steadfastly,
Thou who didst tend the lamp of liberty
To martyrdom, triumphant at the close.
Yet how shall faithless wayfarers propose
Thy flight to follow, win the victory,
When thy Promethean coursers, whirlwind-free,
Bore thee through tempests, over untracked snows?
For thy keen spirit, famished for the goal,
Outran the body, lived as joyously
As thine own 'Cloud' and 'Westwind', caught the
fire
That burns beyond our vision, fed thy soul
On everlasting streams; immortally
Thy fingers sweep across the star-strung lyre.

BYRON.

So splendid, so triumphant, so sincere !
So luckless, melancholic, insincere !
Some men have found thee strong, a Viking soul,
And some have called thee poser, and yet more
Have searched the scandals of thy fervid life
—To find thee worse or better than themselves ;
(Don Juan could have told them that before).
What matter if they find some villany?
A skeleton perforce will smell of earth.
What matter if they trumpet thy brave deeds?
Greece won her freedom without aid of thee.
Ay, even while they delve and strive to bring
Thee back in all thy splendor or thy shame,
Thy features fade, thy form, less palpable,
Melts with thy little story in the past.
Yet still endures thy name. None yet hath been

From whom such mighty torrents have poured
forth,

Such unchecked currents, cataracts of song,
Like Alpine rivers fed eternally,
And, like them, loud, tempestuous, fearing not
To take the perilous leap — and thus to catch
The sunshine in the spray, or, far below,
Fretting Tartarean caverns for escape,
To thunder subterranean harmonies ;
And knowing like them, as by strong instinct,
Their distant destiny, the far-off sea,
Where all their fellow-voyagers gone before
Are singing in harmonious multitude.
When long forgotten are thy miseries,
When all thy pomps are passed from minds of men,
When history can scarce grope back to thee
And spell thy story in the dust of death,
—Then still, O Byron, will men know thy name,
Not for this scandal or that subterfuge,
Not for this triumph or that turpitude,
But for the flooded fulness of thy song,
The oceanic volume of thy verse.

THE ÆGEAN.

“Und an dem Ufer steh’ ich lange Tage,
Das Land der Griechen mit der Seele suchend.”

Goethe: Iphigenie.

Do you remember how we pushed our prow
Past sudden headlands to a magic sea?
Stood Goethe by the helm, and in the bow
Stood Schiller with his face towards Arcady!

And hot Eichstrasse vanished like a mist,
And Völkersweg Ionian furrows grew,
And we were sailing, sailing ere we wist
Past Cretan mountains white against the blue.

Shall you forget that cypress grove we found,
Whence Iphigeneia yearned for her far home?
Or those majestic Lesbian cliffs, ringed round
With what clear sky, with what Ægean foam!

And shall I not again with you embark

Beneath that spirit-sail we found so swift,
Brave crested combers of the outer dark,

Until we glide into the calm and drift—

Drift where the islands gleam across the sea,

Where flash Pentelic temples in the dawn,
Where Gods of Greece descend for you and me
Olympic slope and bright Peneian lawn?

PIETRO'S CURE.

You smile compassion, do you? So you think
We old men, having nothing great to come,
Must needs look back and, looking back, must see
The silly pleasures and the poignant sorrows
That youth sees in its moment's retrospect?
My friend, if manhood brings what manhood may,
No fifty years of woe can cast a gloom
On one victorious moment of strong love.
If that be not, or if that never was,
There is no ripe philosophy of age,
No Christian miracle, no grave-bound spell,
To give man heart to face eternity.

You wonder why I pause?

Ah, thus much have I often told to men
Who stopped a moment from their hastening
To speak with old Pietro by the gate;
But more — just how I know and why I know,

Or, knowing, why I linger here forlorn,
Or—well, my friend, sometimes to talk of things,
To show to wondering eyes a beating heart,
To eyes that never dreamed you had a heart,
Is harder than to mumble senile saws,
To be just old Pietro by the gate.
But sit here on the bench. I will tell you;
For you have told me frankly of your sorrows—
And no doubt they are real;— I will tell you
How years ago the miracle was wrought
That made the whole world — but there, I prate :
The world, forsooth, already hath forgot,
Ay, never knew the whole ; just now and then
Some fancier of old tales wags his beard
And winks and hints at old Pietro's cure —
As if the gossip knew or understood !
But you shall hear—sit down—the folk are gone,
And only those tall cypresses that slope
In strictest silence down to Arno's flood —
And you — shall hear the story of my cure.

What's that you said they told you? ancient
drugs?

Strange potent herbs I bought from blue-nosed hags?
Ay, some said sorcery. Ha ! sorcery !
Jesu, they called thee charlatan as well !
Did you ever think, my friend, how strange it is
That men, who live by love, ay, cure by love,
Should doubt a stronger love than theirs, should hate
And mock another for his love?

What's that?

You are afraid I do forget my tale?
Nay, I shall to it ;—only think, 'tis hard
To know just how to tell in ordered words
What I have never told, to tell a youth
What I have never breathed to one but God.
Hark ! So it has happened : she was very low ; —
She? Oh, she was my Francesca, later
My wife—dead thirty years—

See that slim path between the cypress stems?
It bends to the right and leads along the Arno.
We used to walk there in the setting sun ;
And afterwards with young Francesco, too,—
She wanted him called Pietro, after me,
But I insisted on Francesco, after her ;

He toddled with us — oh, those sunlit days !
Sometimes I tried to thread that way alone,
When they were gone ; but no, 'tis better done
To sit here in the gate and gaze and dream,
To walk there in my fancy, when a slope
Means sport, not scanty breath and tottering knees.
At times a lover and his lady pass this way
And take that path, and so I bless them both ;
And when they laughingly return at eve,
The light, the old dear light, in either's eyes,
I bless them once again. "Good eve, Pietro !"
I think they understand ; — God bless them all !

But to my tale : Francesca, she was low ;
Lay days with eyes unopened, breathed no sound.
They called physicians in — long beards, long
words,—

And nothing came of it. "Not dead," they said ;
"Her pulse tells that : but there's no malady
To fix on ;—nothing can be done but wait."
And so they waited, and Francesca sank,
A shadow with a shadow's fainting heart.
Her father — he was old — well, never mind —

He wrung his hands and offered argosies
If they would work the cure. They shook their
beards

And said that nothing could be done but wait.
At length one day Francesca made a sound,
So faint they heard it only as an echo.
What said she? Was't "Pietro?" Once again!
"Pietro" breathed she—nothing more. They waited,
Listened, curs'd fools, an hour, to make more sure,
Instead of sending swiftly for the man!
What, that young dreaming fool! Pietro? He
That dangled lover-wise with empty purse
Till fair Francesca bade him hold his peace,
She loved him not? Yea, it was I, my friend;
I was that dreaming fool! For know, I had
Paid court, paid honorable court to her;
God knows I worshiped her — a magic lady!
But she — ah, she was very young and, well,
Perhaps a little proud — a very little —
And cast me off. And as for her rich father,—
Lord, he was stricken dumb when she now called.
Despair at last o'ercame reluctant pride;

The doctors said 'twas folly, but he sent,
Sent 'gainst his own will and the doctors' will,
To fetch the cringing pauper whom he scorned.

I came, my brain awlirl, my heart on fire.
"She calls 'Pietro'," said they; "we have tried
The gardener Pietro and her kinsman,
Pietro Baldeschini, but alas!

She knows them not, nor us. — Oh, go gently, —
A little fright may kill her. Yet it seems
There is no other cure save find the man
She names—the only word she speaks. And then,
As if to show that wisdom sprang from beards,
There was a deal of parley — how to go;
What possible contagion she might have;
How Orverus (who ever heard of him!)
How in some chapter of some book he told
The story of some lady once in Venice,
Who, faint in the same way, cooed out a name—
The name of a gondolier (here they all laugh),
Who, being fetched, proved that he was her love,
And wrought a wondrous cure; how then this case,
Since I had been cast off, could not apply,—

With much dissection of my poverty,
And how, except for this one circumstance,
Her lack of love for me, the cases were
Identical,— or might be ; — I know not
What else those doctors might have found in their
beards !

“My God !” I cried ; “what prattle ! Let me go !”
And brushed them all aside (the father there
Gaping astonishment to see the fool,
The dreaming, weak-eyed fool, become a man).
I strode into the room. No, not on guess ;
I knew what then was needed ; she, poor girl,
Was stifled by them all. How I this knew,
And how I further knew she loved poor me,—
Nay, that was God, my friend. Have you remarked
How much men think that God might do, could do,
And then — the miracle come to prove their
thoughts —

They puff with pride at their own omnipotence ?
They did it all ! Well, I did nothing, sir ;
'Twas God that loved us both and worked the cure.

I went into the room and softly spake,

And leaned above her face, and took her hand.
Ah, God, what hours of anguish that day through !
But once, towards deepening afternoon, she spoke.
I could not make it out, but when she spoke
I felt the pulse move in her little hand.
From time to time, like evil-omened birds,
Her father and the doctors flitted in,
But always stopped and, chattering, left again
When I but waved them back. I know not why ;
Until that hour no mortal ever turned
One step aside for me ; but somehow then
God chose me to command.

Well, in the night

She spoke again, still faintly, but I heard.
"Pietro," said she several times, and ah !
I knew well what she meant. "Yes, yes," I cried ;
"Forever !" and when the morning broke she said
In tears : "I knew you would forgive me, love ;
I could not die before I knew you would."
"But you shall live," I whispered.

Nay, my friend,
There is no more than that. Long days, long weeks

I watched her gather strength ; she would not suffer
That I should leave till she was strong again.
At length, with such love in our hearts, we married.
Her father? Oh, he offered thanks and gold,
And stammered nonsense when to his outcry
Against our marrying, Francesca said :
“Father, there is no question ; I am his.”
Ah, yes, we married, and after us he sent
A limping benediction. Then those days !
Those glorious sunlit days !

The tale went round,

And presently a poor wretch begged of me
To cure her child of fever, thought that I
Knew subtle arts above mere medicine.
Of course I tried—vainglorious fool I was !
I tried without success ; and then they snarled,
“A charlatan !”

But when my dear wife died,

I called the doctors in ; I knew full well
That love had cured her of a malady
Which needed love for cure, but could not now.
The other day a man stopped here—he'd heard—

And prated nonsense in the name of Christ,
And then went on to show how "mind" was "love."
Bah ! Do you not suppose, if that were so,
I should have saved Francesca? Do you think
I loved her less as time went on?

See there !

There come two lovers, just as she and I.
Buona sera, senora.— Eh? What's that?
Ay, you shall always find Pietro here.

THE IDEALS.

(*Schiller.*)

So wilt thou faithless from me sever,
With all thy gracious fantasy,
With all thy sufferings, joys, forever,
With all,—irrevocable flee?
Can nothing stay thee in thy speed,
O golden time of life for me?
In vain ! Thy hurrying billows lead
Down to the deep, eternal sea.

O'er-clouded is the gladdening sun
That brightened brave the paths of youth ;
To lees the bright ideals are run
That swelled the drunken heart with Truth.
And gone, too, is Credulity
In Being—child of every dream,
A prey to rough Reality,—
Fair faith that did so god-like seem.

As once with longing imploration

Pygmalion embraced the stone,
And in cold marble adoration

Inspired from his hot self alone,
So threw I me with loving arms

Round Nature firm in youthful quest,
Till she began to breathe, to warm
Her old songs in the poet's breast.

And, sharing thus my pulsing flame,

E'en dumb things found a living speech,
Returned the kiss of love again,

And could my ringing heartstrings reach.
The tree, the rose lived then for me,
The brooklet sang in silverfall ;
The soulless even felt a glee,
The echo of my life in all.

There swelled with over-powering passion

My narrow breast in world-wide bound,
To step out into life, to fashion
In work and word, in scene and sound !

How great this world was shadowed forth

So long the bud hid it within !

How little is the blossom worth !

This little, ah, how small and thin !

How sprang he, winged with spirit bold,

Enraptured by his dream of joy,

Nor reined yet by a sorrow old,

In life's gay course the happy boy !

E'en to the palest stars existant

Raised him the flight of prophecy ;

Naught was too high and naught too distant

For her wings of felicity.

How lightly was he borne along !

What was too hard for happy him !

Before life's load the airy throng,

How danced they in their joyous whim !

Love with its sugar-sweet reward,

Good Fortune with its wreath of gold,

And Glory with its crown all starred,

And Truth in sunshine as of old !

Yet with the way half overcome
Were lost companion and brother ;
They faithless turned their steps towards home ;
One vanished — yielded then another.
Light-footed Joy had flown away,
Unquenched remained the thirst of youth ;
Dark storms of doubt began to play
About the sunshine of the Truth.

I saw high Honour's holy wreath
Unsanctified o'er common eyes ;
Ah ! all too soon the Springtime's breath,
The fair age of our loving, flies !
And then it grew death-still and dimmer,
Forsaken on the rocky steep,
And Hope cast scarce a fleeting glimmer
On gloomy paths beneath my feet.

From all this company of careless,
Who waiteth loving till I come?
Who standeth by me ever fearless
And followeth to the darksome home?

○ thou who for all suffering carest,
The tender hand of Friendship sound,
Who, loving, all life's burdens sharest,—
Thou whom I early sought and found !

And thou who weddest at her altars,
Who stillest, too, the soul's annoys, —
Brave Industry, that never falters,
That slowly works but ne'er destroys ;
That to the eternal structure layeth
But grain of sand for grain of sand,
Yet of Time's debt as surely payeth
Days, minutes, years, with canc'ling hand.

SCENES FROM "MARY STUART"

(*Schiller*)

PART OF ACT 1, SCENE 7.

BURLEIGH. MARY.

BURLEIGH: That you have forged
Conspiracies to undermine our faith,
That you have stirred up all the kings of Europe
'Gainst England to make war—

MARY: And if I had?
I have not done it—but suppose I had?
My lord, they keep me here a prisoner
Against the law of nations. Not with the sword
Came I into this land, but as a suppliant,
Demanding holy hospitality,
Cast myself trustingly in the embrace
Of a blood-related queen. And then mere force
Hath rudely seized me, hath prepared me chains

Where I protection hoped. Speak on, I say!
Am I in conscience bound to aid this state?
Do I towards England any duties owe?
The sacred right of self-defence is mine
When I strive 'gainst these bonds, ply might 'gainst
 might,

And every country in this part of the world
To my protection rouse and set astir.
Whatever fair and knightly is in war,
That may I exercise in self-defense.
Murder alone, the secret bloody deed,
My pride as well as conscience doth forbid;
Murder would soil me and dishonour me.
Dishonour, say I,— in no sort condemn,
Nor yet subject me to a verdict here;
For the issue now between this realm and me
Is not of right; 'tis solely one of power.

BURLEIGH (*significantly*): Call not upon the
fearful right of power,

My lady! It is unkind to prisoners.

MARY: I am the weak one, she the powerful. Well, let her use her strength to murder me,

Make me a sacrifice for her own safety !
But let her then confess that she hath used
Nought but her power, not justice of the law,
Not borrowed from the law the guilty sword
With which she rids herself of a hated foe ;
And let her not clothe in a sacred garb
The brute audacity of mere rude strength,—
May no such jugglery deceive the world !
Murder perhaps she can—she cannot judge me !
Let her have done with seeking to unite
The fruits of crime and holiness of virtue,—
And what she is—that let her dare to seem !

(Exit)

MARY STUART

Act III, Scene 4.

A park.

MARY STUART, HANNA KENNEDY (*her attendant*), PAULET (*her keeper*), SHREWSBURY (*her former keeper*). *To them* ELIZABETH, LEICESTER, *and train.*

ELIZABETH: (*To Leicester*) What is the residence named?

LEICESTER: Fotheringay.

ELIZABETH: (*to Shrewsbury*) Send our hunters ahead to London.

The people press too hotly in the streets;

We'll seek protection in this quiet park.

(*Shrewsbury dismisses the followers. Elizabeth fixes Mary with her eye as she speaks to Leicester.*)

My good folk love too much. Immeasurable,
Idoltrous are the signals of their joy ;
Thus one doth honour to a god, not man.

MARY : (*who during the last few moments has
leaned half-fainting on her companion, draws herself
up, and her eye meets the open gaze of Elisabeth. She
shudders and throws herself again upon her compan-
ion's breast.*)

O God ! No heart speaks from those lineaments !

ELIZABETH : Who is the lady ?

(*All are silent.*)

LEICESTER : Thou art at Fotheringay, my
queen.

ELIZABETH : (*surprised and astonished, glances
darkly at Leicester.*)

Who hath done this thing to me ? Lord Leicester !

LEICESTER : It hath happened, my gracious
queen ;— and now,
Since heaven hath guided hitherwards thy steps,
Let thy magnanimous mercy conquer all.

SHREWSBURY : Oh, be persuaded ! Cast thy
eye, my queen,

Upon this miserable one, who here
Is perishing before thy glance !

(Mary draws herself together and starts to go towards Elizabeth, but, shuddering, stops half-way; her gestures express violent emotion.)

ELIZABETH: How, my lords?
Who told me of one bowed in humbleness?
I find her proud, in no respect subdued.

MARY : So be ! I will subject myself again ;
Hence, fainting pride of my nobility !
I will forget my rank and what I suffered ;
I will cast down myself before her, she
Who so great contumely hath thrust upon me.

(*She turns towards the queen*)
 Heaven hath favoured thee, my sister ! Crowned
 Thy happy head with the wreath of victory ;
 I make my prayer to that which set thee up !

(*She falls down before her*)
Yet, sister, be thou now great-hearted too !
Do not permit this shame ! Reach me thy hand,
Stretch me thy royal hand and raise me up,
From this disgraceful posture raise me up !

ELIZABETH: (*Stepping back*) Thou art in
thy true place, my Lady Stuart!
And gratefully I praise the grace of God,
Which hath not willed that I should grovel so
Before thy feet as thou before mine now.

MARY: (*with rising emotion*) Consider how
mortality doth change!
Ay, there are Gods that humble arrogance!
Oh! honour, fear them,—they who terribly
Flung me thus at thy feet. Honour in me,
For these strange witnesses, honour in me
Thyself! Oh, do not desecrate, disgrace
The Tudor blood which courses through my veins,
Through mine as well as thine. — O God in heaven!
Stand not so stiff and unapproachable,
Like to a rocky cliff some shipwrecked soul
Strives, vainly struggling, to take hold upon.
My all — my life, my fate — hangs on my words,
On my tears' power; oh, but disclose thy heart,
That I may touch it with my words, my tears.
When thou so look'st at me with ice-cold gaze,

My shuddering heart is dumb, my tears are
stopped,

And in my bosom a cold horror chains
The words of imploration I would speak.

ELIZABETH: (*cold and stern*) My Lady Stuart,
what hast thou to say?

Thou hast desired to speak with me. The queen,
The much-insulted, I forget, in order
To do the pious duty of a sister,
To offer thee the comfort of my glance.
My motive is but magnanimity,
And I expose myself to censure just
When I so condescend — for thou well knowest
That thou hast wished to have them murder me.

MARY: Oh, how shall I begin, how wisely
speak,

That all my words may win, not wound, thy heart!
O God, grant my speech strength, deprive it of
Each nettle that might sting! Yet I cannot
Speak truly in my own behalf without
Accusing thee — and that I do not wish.
Ay, thou hast treated me unrighteously,

For I am a queen as well as thou — yet thou
Hast held me like a common prisoner.
I came to thee a suppliant, and thou,
Mocking the laws of hospitality,
The sacred right of nations, shuttest me
In dungeon walls ; my friends, even my servants,
Are cruelly torn from me ; I am exposed
To ignominious want ; they lead me forth
Before a shameful court.— No more of that !
Oblivion cover what cruelty I endured !
— See, I will call it all a dispensation,
Thou art not guilty any more than I ;
An evil spirit rose from the abyss,
Enkindling in our hearts the bitter hate
Which severed us already in our youth ;
It grew with us, and evil persons fanned
The wretched flames ; mad-visioned zealots armed
Their uninvokèd hands with sword and dirk,—
This is the fate accurst of kings and queens :
That they, divided, rend the world with hate,
And thus unfetter furies of dissension.
— No longer now a stranger stands between us ;

(Approaches confidently and with flattering tone)
We stand now face to face. Speak, sister, speak !
Name me my guilt, that I may render thee
The fullest satisfaction. Oh, that thou
Hadst granted me a hearing in those days
When I so eagerly sought out thy eye !
It had not come to this ; in this sad place
This hapless meeting had not come to pass.

ELIZABETH : My good star hath protected me
from that,
From pressing the adder to my heart. Accuse
Not fate, accuse thy own black heart, the wild
Ambition of thy house. Between us two
Had nothing hostile happened when thy uncle,
The proud, imperious priest, whose insolent hand
Is stretched for every crown, declared the feud,
Bewitched thee to adopt my coat-of-arms,
To take my royal title to thyself,
To go to war with me for life and death.
Whom did he not arouse against my throne ?
The tongues of priests, the swords of nations ; ay,
And the fearful weapons of fanatic zeal !

Here even, in the peace of mine own realm,
He fanned the flame of insurrection!—
But God is on my side, and the proud priest
Doth not yet hold the field. The blow was meant
To strike my head — but now 'tis thine that falls!

MARY: I stand in the hand of God. Thou wilt
not thus

Cruelly presume upon thy power, wilt not —

ELIZABETH: Nay, who shall hinder me? Thy
uncle set

Ensample to the kings of all the world
How one makes amity with enemies.
May St. Bartholomew be my school, too!
What is the bond of blood to me, or what
The right of nations? Bonds of all my pledges
Thy church dissevers, for it sanctifies
Disloyalty and regicide; I practice
Only that which thine own priests teach. More, too,
What pledge would give me surety for thee
If I should generously loose thy bonds?
With what lock shall I guard thy precious faith,
What lock St. Peter's key cannot unspring?

Power is the single surety I have ;
No league can be made with the serpent's brood.

MARY : Oh, that is thy suspicion sinister !
Thou hast treated me as a foe and stranger.
Hadst thou but named me, as I had the right,
Thy heiress, gratitude and love had saved
Thy relative a faithful friend to thee.

ELIZABETH : Out yonder, Lady Stuart, are
thy friends ;
Thy dwelling is the papacy ; the monk,
He is thy brother ; — what, name thee my heir !
Oh, treacherous trick ! That thou, a sly Armida,
Might'st still mislead my folk before mine eyes,
Entangle in thy nets of wantonness
My kingdom's noble youth — that everything
Might turn towards thee, the new-arising sun,
While I —

MARY : Rule on in peace. I do renounce
Whatever claim I have upon this realm.
Ah ! my spirit's wings are crippled ; now no more
Doth greatness lure me on. Thou hast attained it ;
And I am but the shade of what I was.

In ignominious imprisonment
My courage hath been broken. Thou hast done
The worst, thou hast destroyed me in my bloom !
— Now make an end, my sister ! Speak it now,
The word for the sake of which thou hast come here.
For ne'er will I believe that thou hast come
Cruelly to flout thy victim. Speak but this ;
Say : “ Mary, thou art free ! My might thou knowest ;
Learn now to value my great-heartedness.”
Say it, and I will then accept my life,
My life and freedom, as a gift from thee.
One word undoth all that hath ever been.
For that I wait — let me not wait too long !
Woe, woe to thee if thou speak not that word !
For if thou goest not beneficent,
Not noble, as a God might go, — O sister !
Not for this whole rich island, nay, nor yet
For every land encircled by the sea,
Would I before thee stand as thou dost stand !

ELIZABETH : So thou acknowledgest defeat at
last ?

Are thy complots all over with ? Is there

Still no assassin on the way? Will none
Still dare a sorry knighthood in thy cause?
Ay, Lady Mary, those things all are past;
No more shalt thou mislead my folk from me.
The world hath other cares — no one desires
To be thy — thy *fourth* husband, for thou killest
Thy suitors as thy husbands!

MARY: (*starting angrily*) Sister! Sister!
O God! God! grant me some self control!

ELIZABETH: (*observing her for a long time
with a look of proud disdain*) So these, Lord Leicester,
are the famous charms
Which none unsmitten see, compared to which
No other woman dares to vaunt herself!
Forsooth! The fame was cheap to win; it costs
Nothing to be the beauty all men prize —
Except to be the common prize of all!

MARY: That is too much!

ELIZABETH: (*laughing scornfully*) Show now
thy own true face;
We have beheld till now only the mask!

MARY (*hot with anger, yet with noble dignity*)

If in the human frailty of youth
I sinned, if might misled me, I at least
Did not keep secret, hidden, what I did !
With royal candour I have scorned to give
A false appearance to my deeds of sin !
The world hath heard the worst, and I can say
That I am better than my reputation !
But woe to thee, if men should draw away
The cloak of honor from thy deeds, the veil
With which thou, hypocrite, dost hid thy sins,
The savage passion of thy stolen loves !
No heritage of chastity hast thou
From Anne Boleyn ; 'tis everywhere well known
What virtue brought thy mother to the block !

SHREWSBURY : (*Stepping between the two
queens*)

O God of heaven ! Must it go so far !
Is this thy self-control and thy submission,
Lady Mary ?

MARY : My self-control ! I have
Endured what any human being could !
Away, lamb-hearted calm ! To heaven fly,

Poor, suffering patience ! Burst thy bonds at last,
Burst from thy cavern, long-suppressèd hate !
And thou, who gave the angered basilisk
His murderous glance, give arrows to my tongue !

SHREWSBURY : Oh, she's beside herself ! For-
give her rage,
Forgive her, much provoked !

LEICESTER : (*in great agitation, seeking to
lead Elizabeth away*)

Listen no more !
Oh, come away, come from this wretched place !

MARY : A bastard hath profaned the English
throne !

The noble British folk hath been deceived
By a cunning sorceress ! If right did rule,
Then *thou* would'st lie in dust—for I am King !

(*Elizabeth goes off quickly; the lords follow her
in great confusion.*)

SCENES FROM GRILLPARZER'S SAPPHO

The tragedy of the play is expressed in the lines (Act V, scene 3.):

“For mortal never yet returned unscathed
Who once hath sat at table with the Gods.”*

SAPPHO, *after her immortal song, falls in love with PHAON, whom she for a time inspires with a nobleness not his own. Soon, however, he leaves her for MELITTA, a slave-girl; and SAPPHO, after a struggle, realizes her tragic fate and, at the end of the play, takes her famous leap from the cliff. RHAMNES is a chief slave, EUCHARIS a slave-girl. At the beginning of Act V, Scene 4, RHAMNES upbraids PHAON before MELITTA and citizens of Mytilene for the injury to SAPPHO's life, though he does not know how prophetic his words are of the immediate catastrophe.*

*“Man steigt nicht ungestraft vom Göttermahle
Herunter in den Kreis der Sterblichen.”

RHAMNES :

And who art thou

That thou may'st set thy wisdom in the scales
In which mankind its chosen children weighs?
That thou should'st dare to speak where Greece has
spoken?

Dim-sighted, wanton fool ! Deem'st thou her worth-
less

Because thou hast no measure of her worth?
Callest thou the jewel blind because thine eye is?
That she loved thee, that out of filthy dust
She raised the thankless serpent to herself,
Which now with poisonous fang lays bare her heart,
That she on thee her riches richly squandered,
On thee who hath no sense for such great treasure,
That is the single spot in all her life ;
E'en jealousy can charge no other fault.
Speak not ! Thy spite itself, in which thou now
Swell'st proud towards her, belongeth not to thee ;
How hadst thou, out of thy despised baseness,
Thou most forgotten of the most forgotten,
How hadst thou dared to speak 'gainst Greece's
jewel?

That she once looked on thee gave thee the pride
With which thou boldly now look'st down on her.

PHAON: I may not strive indeed with her
famed song.

RHAMNES: Thou may'st not? Ah, indeed!
As if thou couldst!

High on the stars hath she enrolled her name,
With diamond letters hath enrolled her name,
And only with the stars will it die out.

In distant ages and among strange men,
When long have fallen these our rotten frames,
And when our graves themselves no longer are,
Will Sappho's song sound from the lips of men,
Will still live on her name—and with it thine!

Yes, thine! Be proud of immortality
Thy wanton crime against her life brings thee.
In unknown lands, in future generations,
When unborn centuries have staggered down
Into the grave of time, will it ring forth
From every mouth: Sappho was this one called
Who sang this song, and Phaon he who killed her!

MELITTA: O Phaon!

PHAON :

Peace ! Peace !

RHAMNES :

Poor

comforter !

Dost thou bid peace with an unpeaceful voice?
May this Melitta trembling know thy crime, —
That one revenge shall Sappho have at least !
—Thou may'st not strive with her in glorious song?
And in what other field may'st strive with her?
Dost dare to doubt that in her heart is that
Which for its very life must thank her heart?
Look round about thee ! There is no one here
For whom she has not kindly done, who bears
Not in himself, in house and field, estate,
And in his household, marks of her rich kindness,
No single one, whose heart has not beat higher
When he could count himself a citizen
Of Mytilene, and a friend of Sappho.
But ask that trembling thing there at thy side,
Companion, it appears, of deed, not guilt,
How such a mistress hath rewarded her.
What other thing had this slave thee to offer?
When she so pleased thee, it was Sappho's spirit,

Was Sappho's spirit, gentle, motherly,
Which in her deeds so strongly called to thee.
Oh, press upon thy brow ! Thou striv'st in vain ;
Thou never canst blot out the memory !
And what think'st thou to do ? Or where to flee ?
No sanctuary for thee on this earth !
For in the pious breast of every man
A foe arises to the foe of Sappho.
Before thee will thy reputation run,
Crying aloud into the ear of man ;
Here Sappho's murderer ! Here the Gods' own foe !
And outlawed shalt thou wander through the land
With her to whom thou ruin gav'st for shield,
No Greek with thee his hospitable house
Will share, no God grant entrance to the temple ;
And shrieking shalt thou flee from altar-steps
When banished, sacrilegious, by the priest ;
And if thou fleest, then will the Eumenid,*
The grisly, black avenger of the shades,
Shake snaky locks behind thee and before
And in thy ears screech shrilly Sappho's name,
Until the grave thou diggest swallows thee.

*Singular number in Grillparzer: "*die grause Eumenide*."

SAPPHO

Act V, Scene V.

EUCHARIS. *The others as in Scene IV.*

EUCHARIS: I followed at a distance
To the long high hall and, hidden safely there,
I watched her every turn with sharpest eye.
There stood she, leaning by a column's base,
Gazing far down across the wide Ægean,
Which foaming thundered on the rocky shores.
Speechless and motionless she stood up there,
With staring eyes and with a death-pale cheek,
Among the marble statues, like to them.
But sometimes started she and seized a flower
Or gold or jewels—and whate'er she reached,
That flung she down into the splendid sea
And followed with a wistful eye the cast.

I am about to draw more close when strikes
A sound that shakes her to her very heart ;
The lyre it is, hung high upon the pillar,
Wherein the sea air plays a melody.
Gasping she glances up and startles back
As from the touch of higher, unseen power ;
Her eyes are fixèd, staring on the lyre,
Her death-pale features flush again to life,
And a strange smiling plays about her mouth ;
Now open, too, the firmly closèd lips
And speak forth words of terror-striking sound,
From Sappho's mouth, yet never Sappho's words :
'Callest thou me, O friend upon the wall ?
Oh well, I understand thee, friend ; thou warnest
Of ancient times long flowed away—God bless thee !'
— How then she reached the wall and how the lyre,
High on the wall, I know not well to say,
For like a lightning stroke all flashed me by.
Now look I once again ; she holds the lyre
And presses it against her storm-tossed breast,
Which snatches breath so loud that I can hear.
The victor's wreath, then, the Olympian,

That hung upon the altar of her house,
She winds about her head and throws the cloak
Of glowing purple on her glowing shoulders.
Who saw her now, the first time saw her now,
Standing upon the high steps of the altar,
The lyre in her hand, her face exalted,
Exalted all her splendid, luminous form,
Light of transfiguration on her brow,
He would have called her an immortal one,
And sunk in prayer upon his trembling knees.

Soon after, SAPPHO appears, richly dressed and carrying her lyre. After a long, passionate appeal to the Gods, she turns to PHAON and MELITTA, blesses them, calls again to the Gods, and then leaps into the sea.

RHAMNES makes the last speech of the play:

Wilted the laurel and dead the music of stringed
instruments !

Her home was not upon this mortal earth ;

(with uplifted hands)

She hath returned to mingle with her kind.

NIAGARA

(*Lenau*)

CLEAR and as the youth-time gaily
And as murmuring sweet sound,
Slips the stream Niagara onward
By the forest's verdant bound;
Slips along in gentle flowing,
So that yet the forest's pride
And the stars of silent night-time
Find reflection in its tide.

Ay, so softly glide the billows
That unbroken, clear as fact,
Strikes upon the ear the thunder
Of the distant cataract.

When the waters gently flowing
 Nearer to the torrent gleam,
 Suddenly wild premonitions
 Of its fall possess the stream.

Careless of the earth and heaven,
 On it hurries in mad train,
 Shatters all the fair reflection
 Which it bore so passing fain ;

Plunge and shoot the water-courses,
 Thunder on in mad career,
 As if torn along by passion
 To the drop so great, so sheer.

What the traveller far hath hearkened,
 The great river's thunder bound,
 Hears he not when nearer coming,
 Since so loud the torrent's sound.

And thus vainly may one listen
 Who comes close upon a fall ;
 Yet the prophet in the distance
 Heard the future's trumpet-call.

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